SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

LANSING, MICHIGAN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 27, 2005

Democrats Introduce Strong Legislation to Protect Michigan Water from Privatization and Diversion

Contact:

Phone:

Sen. Liz Brater

517-373-2406

Brater: "Water is the oil of the 21st Century"

LANSING- Following months of careful preparation, including a series of public hearings and meetings with citizens, public interest groups, and stakeholders, Senate Democrats have introduced a package of bills that will establish clear rules for water use and withdrawals while protecting the manufacturing and agriculture industries.

"Water will be the oil of the 21st Century," said Sen. Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor), minority vice chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. "It is Michigan's most important natural resource, and we need strong laws that prevent unregulated shipping of Great Lakes water out of the basin."

Included in Senate Democrats new water package are the following five bills:

SB 854 amends Inland Lakes and Streams Act to require a permit for water withdrawals that have adverse environmental impacts to lakes and streams.

SB 855 will protect Michigan's water from privatization by requiring legislative approval for a private water supplier that wants to compete with a public water supplier and water bottlers that want to ship water outside of Great Lakes basin.

SB 856 creates a requirement for public comment for proposed diversions.

SB 857 amends the Safe Drinking Water Act by requiring the DEQ to consider adverse environmental impacts from projects that apply for a permit.

SB 858 encourages water conservation by requiring large water users to certify that they are using water conservation practices appropriate to their industry.

"Plans proposed by legislative Republicans include an exemption for the bottling industry that Michigan residents will not tolerate," said Brater. "Water is water, whether it is shipped in a truckload of sixteen ounce bottles, a tanker, or a pipeline."

Critics point out that the GOP water management proposal continues to ignore the issue of water diversion from the Great Lakes. Today, Democrats repeated their call for action on Governor

Granholm's Water Legacy Act. The Governor's proposal was first introduced back in March of 2004.

"The Senate Democrats' proposal best reflects the priorities of the Michigan citizens regarding water use and withdrawal," said Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor), sponsor of SB 854 and member of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee. "We need to start thinking about the future, and our bills do that."